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SUBJECT: UNSYG BAN'S PRE-BALI CLIMATE CHANGE BRIEFER FROM
UNFCCC

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Summary

11. (SBU) In an October 18 briefing memo to the UN Secretary-General summarizing events and possible actions

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leading up to the December ministerial in Bali, Yvo de Boer, the UN's top climate change official, says he expects an Indonesian-hosted pre-ministerial in Bogor October 23-25 to reveal a great deal about whether Bali will be a "success" or "failure," as well as guide the SYG on how best to wield his own influence to facilitate a successful outcome. The SYG plans a busy travel agenda in coming months to further spotlight concerns on climate change. End summary.

12. (SBU) Following UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's September 24 High-Level Event on climate change in New York, Ban convened an October 8 meeting of his climate change Special Envoys and principals of his informal Climate Change Team to strategize on how best to promote a successful outcome for the Bali Climate Change ministerial in December. Among the apparent outcomes of that process are the SYG's decisions to highlight climate change during upcoming visits to Antarctica (being facilitated by Chile, whose former president Ricardo Lagos is one of the SYG's special climate envoys), to Amazonia, and to Valencia, Spain for the November release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment synthesis report. The SYG will attend the high-level segment of the Bali conference as well. The October 8 meeting also stimulated Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

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(UNFCCC) Secretariat, to write a briefing and recommendations paper to the SYG, which was submitted on October 18. (Note: A copy, which we obtained privately from a UN contact, has been forwarded to IO/EDA. End note.)

Background on Bali

13. (SBU) In his briefing paper, de Boer describes the five main meetings taking place during the Bali conference, focusing on the three "that will determine the outcome of Bali in terms of future negotiations": the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 13), the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and the Kyoto Protocol's Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties

(AWG). De Boer tells the SYG that the COP 13 will consider the report of an informal dialogue (begun in 2005) on four options for further action:

- continuation of the dialogue (favored by China);
- launch of discussions on future commitments/actions within the COP;
- launch of a negotiating group under the COP to develop a new agreement either to supplement or to succeed the Kyoto Protocol; or
- launch of joint negotiations under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol in a single process.

De Boer states that the first option would be considered a "failure" for Bali, while the developing states are likely to reject the final option. He therefore asserts that either of the middle two options, and preferably the third, are the most likely outcomes of Bali.

¶4. (SBU) The CMP will undertake a review of the Kyoto Protocol, but talks on this theme during previous ministerials broke down over splits among developed and developing countries. Meanwhile, the AWG will discuss a workplan and timetable for Annex I Parties to complete a new negotiation for further greenhouse gas reductions (on the order of 25-40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020).

UNFCCC Recommendations on the SYG's Role

¶5. (SBU) De Boer's memo emphasizes that the UNFCCC process is "government driven" where "parties guard their prerogatives jealously," warning the SYG and UN agencies from taking too proactive a role. He also cautions the SYG against

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establishing any new UN "coordination mechanisms" outside the UNFCCC Secretariat. More broadly, however, he sees the most "urgent" requirement as the implementation by UN system agencies of existing mandates, particularly regarding adaptation to climate change. "The UN system record in that respect is not what it could be and this is not lost in the eyes of the Parties." De Boer recommends that the SYG's Climate Change Team stick to drafting statements and talking points for the SYG and his envoys, but not to get involved in Bali preparations or negotiations.

¶6. (SBU) De Boer promises to brief the SYG on the outcome of an informal ministerial meeting of about 40 countries on October 23-25 in Bogor, Indonesia, which Indonesia is convening to help "prepare the ground" for Bali (reftel). He predicts that the results of the Bogor meeting "will provide a clear indication of where we are going in terms of success or failure in Bali." (Note: De Boer also requested to deliver a statement from the SYG at Bogor. End note.) "Once the Bogor results are known, that would be a good time... to approach countries that may have been most recalcitrant." De Boer suggests employing the SYG's and his envoys' personal interventions. "Having established yourself as an important voice and actor on climate change, your authority would need to be invoked on topics of strategic importance ('the high ground') without getting involved in the highly divisive technicalities of the negotiations." De Boer concludes with a recommendation that the SYG's program for the December 12-14 high-level segment in Bali be kept flexible in case he should choose to engage in "corridor and back-room diplomacy." WOLFF